



## Impact of Teamwork on Employee Engagement in Primary and Secondary schools: The Nigerian Experience

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of Teamwork on Engagement among employees of private primary and secondary schools in Plateau State, Nigeria using the dimensions of Teamwork, which are Communication, Leadership, Team Structure, Situation Monitoring, and Mutual Support on Employee Engagement.

**Research design, data, and methodology** – To analyze the relationship among the variables, the study adopted the descriptive and explanatory research design, and a cross-sectional survey method using a survey questionnaire containing 29 items, with a 5-point Likert scale. The samples of 274 employees (both academic and non-academic) were selected using a simple random probability sampling technique. Multiple Regression was used to analyze data with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23.0).

**Result** – This shows that Communication, Leadership, and Situation Monitoring have a positive and significant relationship on Employee Engagement, while Team Structure and Mutual Support show a negative direction but still maintained a significant relationship.

**Conclusion** – The management of private primary and secondary schools should pay attention to Communication, Leadership, Team Structure, Situation Monitoring, and Mutual Support among their employees to promote Employee Engagement in the workplace. It also recommends that future studies should be carried out in other sectors.

**Keywords:** Teamwork, Employee Engagement, Communication, Leadership, Situation Monitoring, Team Structure, Mutual Support.

**JEL Classification Code:** O15, M12.

## **1. Introduction**

Team working has been a fashionable management idea in the redesign of work for over half a century and after being observed in UK manufacturing environments in the 1950s, the concept has developed and spread widely across industries and international contexts. (Gatenby, 2008). In other words, the concept of teamwork has been at the core of organizations for close to a century. According to (Sanyal & Hisam, 2018), teamwork can enable the members of the team to have a higher level of emotional security, self-confidence, and the ability to plan and decide with others positively. Also, it helps in creating a healthy work environment with workable agendas, creative activities, positive strategies, and values. On the other hand, the absence of teamwork concepts and strategies can lead to occupational failure, disappointment, low morale, and poor productivity which threaten the entity of the organization. Most successful companies do not hire an individual who cannot work with teams to solve conflicts and achieve various tasks, and that proves the importance of teamwork as an essential skill in the work environment. (Sanyal & Hisam, 2018). Studies on this subject have shown numerous benefits both to employees and the organization itself. Teamwork typically involves groups of independent employees who work cooperatively to achieve group outcomes (Parker and Wall, 1998).

According to Don and Raman (2019), teamwork between headmasters, teachers, and staff in a school is the element that can unite the school organization in achieving quality improvement. They stressed that an effective team definitely can implement development within the school organization. The combination of a variety of skills, experience, and judgment allows the team gets better results than a bunch of individuals. The team will be more flexible and able to achieve a combination of productivity and performance that is dreamed of by the school. (Don and Raman, 2019). Implementation of teamwork strategies has potential benefits for employee outcomes in organizations (Lawler et al, 1992), has a significant effect on job satisfaction (Griffin et al, 2001), and poses greater organizational performance (Kyzlinkova et al, 2007; Barak et al, 1999). Keebler et al (2014) postulated communication, leadership, team structure, situation monitoring, and mutual support to be the dimensions of Teamwork.

Literature has shown that employees find engagement as an opportunity to have reasonable input in the organization. When employees are engaged, it gives them a sense of value and challenge (Osibanjo et al, 2020). Tomislav (2019) thinks that employees can be engaged in workplace development activities using mental acts of acquiring knowledge, using thoughts emotions, experiences, and senses (cognitive engagement), feelings and emotions (affective/emotional engagement), and through their actions (behavioral/physical engagement). According to Amah and Sese (2018), organizations require the services of employees who are willing to go the extra mile (work outside assigned job roles) needed to create an agile organization. Employees that are engaged apply themselves totally (body, soul, and emotion) to roles assigned to them and perform extra-role activities not included in their job schedules but that are necessary for higher organizational productivity and provide the needed competitive advantage for organizations. Employee engagement is also known to have a positive effect on organizational and individual productivity and performance (Amah and Sese, 2018). Reviewing the various drivers of employee engagement, the authors believe that different factors are responsible for employee engagement; some of which are job satisfaction (Vokic & Hernaus, 2015), leadership style (Kruse, 2012), human capital management (Osibanjo et al, 2020), and people-oriented management methods (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020). Getting employees actively engaged and involved in the workplace is of utmost importance to the management of organizations as this contributes in no small measure to organizational success and the attainment of set goals.

The paper is structured as follows; after the introduction, a theoretical background is developed. The concepts of Employee Engagement and Teamwork are presented. The dimensions of Teamwork are also discussed and followed by an overview of the existing knowledge about their interplay leading to our theoretical assumptions which have been formulated through five hypotheses. The research methodology is presented and Structural Equation Model is introduced to validate the hypotheses. The results of the findings are discussed, followed by theoretical implications, conclusion, limitations, and area of focus for future research.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Theoretical foundations**

For investigating employee teamwork and organizational success, this research invokes the Social Facilitation Theory. This theory examines the influences of other people on the increases or decreases of an individual's performance level. (Zajonc, 1965). For example, when other people are around and the task is easy, then performance

is better than when the individual is performing the task alone; if the task is hard, then the person's performance is worse than when he or she is performing the task alone (Aiello & Douthitt, 2006; Geen, 1991). This theory is of the view that the co-workers around can either increase or decrease an individual's output, noting that the presence of the group affects the concentration of attention on task performance.

From the social facilitation theory, we see that the central theme is teamwork. Teamwork according to Dianna (2006) is a form of collective work that might involve individual tasks, but usually involves some kind of collective task where each member is contributing part of a collectively written document that is supposed to reflect the collective wisdom of the group. Teamwork is bringing together a set of tasks and activities performed by persons who collaborate to achieve a common goal. That goal can be creating a tangible or intangible product, carrying out a task, or making a decision. Teamwork is different from individual work because it involves shared responsibility for a final purpose. Keebler et al (2014) identified five dimensions of teamwork to be communication, leadership, team structure, situation monitoring, and mutual support.

## **2.2. Concept of Employee Engagement**

Jena and Pradhan (2017) posited that employee engagement differs across national boundaries and organizations locally or globally, as a result of the socio-cultural, technological, economic, and political differences, and engagement is the degree to which individuals are concentrating and engrossed in work while carrying out their roles. Employee engagement is seen by Chandhok and Bhavet (2014) as a passion and commitment to devote oneself and expand one's discretionary effort to contribute toward achieving the goals and objectives of the organization as a whole. So, employee engagement can be seen as the extent to which employees think, feel and act in ways that show a high-level commitment to their organization. According to Kahn (1990), workers are more engaged when they feel the work to be done is safe and meaningful, and they are readily available to do the job. He defined engagement as the level to which individuals show dedication and involvement in their work. Baig (2010) was of the opinion that employee engagement is concerned with individual contribution under healthy working conditions, promotes individual development, and encourages confidence and understanding between the employer and the employee and between the employees themselves. Engagement is evidence that employees in the organization are liable to be reciprocal as long as there is a standing give-and-take relationship between them and the organization that is financially, emotionally, and physically visible (Saks, 2016; Stankeviciute & Savaneviciene, 2018).

Scholars have stressed its importance not only to the organization but also to the employees. Susana et al. (2007) in their study discovered that dedicated employees that are more active in their work have better health and performed better than non-dedicated employees. This tallies with the work of Yang (2005), Wilmar and Arnold (2006) who found out that dedicated (engaged) employees get more satisfaction from work, have a positive mindset and behavior, possess higher organizational commitment, and are willing to do more when compared with employees that are not engaged. Studies have also revealed that employee engagement has a positive impact on employee performance (Salanova, 2005), has a positive influence on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Saks, 2006), and also has a positive effect on employee out-of-role performance (Bakker, 2008). According to Jalaja and Padashetty (2018), employee engagement is key to improving organizational performance and Vizzuso (2015) found that leaders design strategies to engage employees. Improving employee engagement may increase the likelihood of improving customer satisfaction, which directly influences the financial stability of organizations while improving managers' ability to lead. The influence of leadership on employee engagement plays an important role in increasing organizational productivity, efficiency, and financial success.

## **2.3. Concept of Teamwork**

Teamwork is the concept of people working together cooperatively, as in a sales team, sports team, etc. It has also become so valued that many large corporations have developed specific tests to measure potential employees' teamwork ability (Adeleke, 2008). Hence, an important belief in most workplaces is that teamwork encourages cooperation and gives employees a sense of ownership. Dianna (2006) affirmed that teamwork is a form of collective work that might involve individual tasks, but usually involves some kind of collective task where each member is contributing part of a collectively written document that is supposed to reflect the collective wisdom of the group. Unlike group work, which focuses on an exchange, the thrust of teamwork is discussion. The discussion takes place when members share their views among themselves within the group. A major requirement of discussion is fairness so that each member's thoughts and ideas are viewed in a balanced way. It can take more time than an exchange, but with practice, a timekeeper, and a few rules, groups can create fair discussions that are also time-efficient (Fapohunda, 2013). In the words of Boine (2021), to increase relation-directed organization culture, organization and management

should emphasize family hood atmosphere, emphasize national peace and unity, and also teamwork. This shows that teamwork is among the necessary factors needed for building a strong organizational culture. Sanyal and Hisam (2018) opined that teamwork can enable the members of the team to have a higher level of emotional security, self-confidence, and the ability to plan and decide with others positively. They also opined that teamwork can be accurately viewed as a group of individuals coming together to work cooperatively to achieve a specific goal or objective. Keebler et al (2014) identified five dimensions of teamwork to be team structure, leadership, situation monitoring, mutual support, and communication. Sequels to this line of thought, the following dimensions (variables) are discussed below.

### **2.3.1. Communication**

Communication is seen by Agarwal and Garg (2012) as the activity of conveying information. It is the exchange of thought, information, or emotion between individuals, or groups within the organization; that is, communication plays an important role in making sure individual and organizational objectives are achieved and fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication. The functioning and survival of organizations are based on effective relationships among individuals and groups (Jones et al., 2004), and where there are effective relationships among individuals and groups, teamwork is strengthened. Stemming from the social facilitation theory and empirical evidence that when a thought, information, or emotion is conveyed to a group/team, individuals are motivated to achieve that goal, we hypothesize that:

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between communication and employee engagement.

### **2.3.2. Leadership**

According to Stogdill and Coons (1957), leadership is the individual behavior that guides a group to achieve a common target. In achieving the common target/goal, the involvement of every member (teamwork) is important and effective leadership is needed to give the team the right direction for it to realize its goal, thereby making leadership an integral part of the success of any team. Through leadership and motivation of personnel, Samson and Lee (2021) highlighted how CAP Corporation overcame its financial crisis and became the leading manufacturer of wiper blades in Korea. Mehra, Smith, Dixon, and Robertson (2006) argue that when some organizations seek efficient ways to enable them to outperform others, a longstanding approach is to focus on the effects of leadership. Team leaders play a pivotal role in helping to shape collective norms, assisting teams to adjust to the environments, and also coordinating collective action. This leader-centered perspective has provided valuable insights into the relationship between leadership and team performance (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). Based on the theoretical perspective that individuals are influenced by other individuals in a team, we propose the hypothesis that:

**H2:** There is a significant relationship between leadership and employee engagement.

### **2.3.3. Team Structure**

The team structure is a type of organizational structure, often seen as less hierarchical in which individuals are grouped into teams (Williams et al, 2005). Takuya (2009) opined that there is nothing like a size fits all type of concept at play when handling different types of team structures with specific goals in mind. Deep thought and consideration are necessary for identifying, assembling, and also convincing the team members to work together on a variety of assignments.

Takuya (2009) also postulated that there is two key team structure that organizations form to achieve objectives. These are project teams and functional teams. According to him, functional teams are teams that work based on broad guidelines and policies usually put in place by top executives. These teams are in charge of finance, sales, and marketing and they are largely responsible for executing and achieving the grand vision of the organization. Project teams on the other hand are put together to carry out certain tasks, meet certain goals or accomplish a vision in a set time. Once these goals are achieved, these teams are in most cases dissolved and team members go back to carrying out their daily and routine tasks. Here, we see a connection between teams and engagement, and based on social facilitation theory, we hypothesize thus

**H3:** There is a significant relationship between team structure and employee engagement.

### **2.3.4. Situation Monitoring**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (2012) defines situation monitoring as the process of actively scanning and assessing elements of the situation to gain information or maintain an accurate understanding of the situation in which the team functions. Situation monitoring can be trained for or developed because it is a skill. Monitoring a situation continually enables the team to anticipate and predict the needs of fellow team members, allowing the team to be more adaptive and flexible. This makes the team recognize early and respond promptly to deviations in their plans, potential problems, or dangerous circumstances. Because of this alertness, teams are in a better position to self-correct, compensate for fellow team members' lapses, and reallocate functions where necessary. Effective teams have an understanding of the way a procedure or plan should be done and established goals and objectives met, which allows teams to spot, mitigate, and correct errors before they occur or cause harm. Situation monitoring is a major aspect of the teamwork process and is intimately connected to the other four essentials of teamwork. Because situation monitoring concerns the ability and willingness to monitor situations continuously and reveals its findings to other team members, it is enhanced by team leadership. Situation monitoring is also supported by communication, which allows for the sharing of new and emerging information. Drawing from theoretical and empirical evidence that happenings in the workplace are always gauged by employees to gain insight into workplace functions and situations, we thus hypothesize that:

**H4:** There is a significant relationship between situation monitoring and employee engagement.

### **2.3.5. Mutual Support**

Mutual support is an element of teamwork that gives team members a superior work experience, which can motivate them for greater performance. Team members receive assistance and encouragement as they work on tasks and rely on other people with shared goals. Such support can encourage people to achieve goals they may not have had the confidence to have reached on their own. (Lumen,n.d). In the workplace, supervisors have been recognized as being instrumental in developing the roles and expectations of employees (Graen & Scandura, 1987) by structuring the work environment and by providing information and feedback to employees (Griffin et al., 2001). As a result, having a perception that one's supervisor is supportive is an indication of a pleasant work environment. Like supervisor support, coworker support also involves the interpersonal transfer of instrumental or emotional resources (Yoon & Thye, 2000; House, 1981). Similarly, coworker support allows individuals to feel valued, cared for, and supported by colleagues, which makes a work environment more pleasant and rewarding (vanYperen & Hagedoorn, 2003) and this makes for bonding among team members. Supportive relationships among colleagues generally enhance well-being, as coworker support at the workplace is likely to fulfill the need for affiliation between coworkers (Chay, 1993). As Hobfoll (1988) argued, coworkers can be a key source of resources for employees. On condition that coworkers are willing to listen to job-related problems, help assist with the job, can be relied upon when things become difficult on the job, and share worries and concerns, workgroup cohesion is enhanced (Iverson, 1996) and all these appear to be effective in buffering responses toward job-related stress (Ashford, 1988). Based on a theoretical perspective (behaviors in the group/team are associated with support from other teams/group members), the following hypothesis is put forward:

**H5:** There is a significant relationship between mutual support and employee engagement.

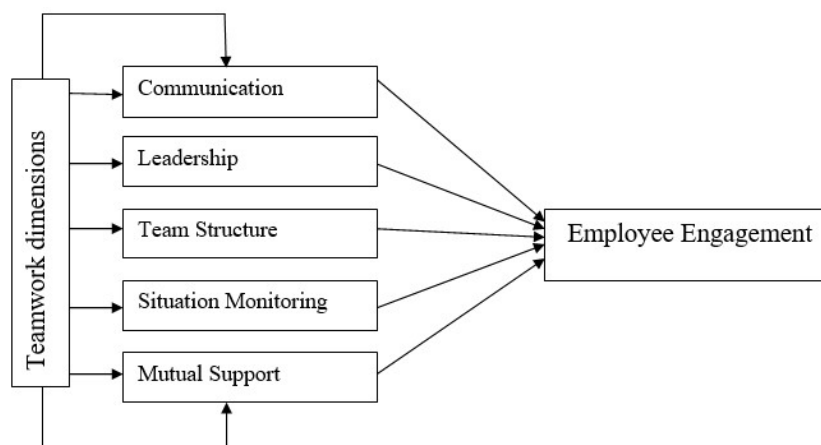
## **2.4. Teamwork and employee engagement**

As has been explained by Robbins and Judge (2007), a work team is a group of employees whose individual efforts result in a performance that is greater than the sum of their inputs. They opined that teamwork helps employees to reduce individual conflicts, cooperate, provide feedback and enhance their skills. According to Adair (1988), teams may be portrayed as effective work groups whose effectiveness rests on the degree of motivation, coordination, and purpose and whose synergy produces an energy/creativity which is beyond them as individuals, hence, teams must possess a definable membership, group consciousness and a sense of shared purpose (Adair, 1988). Using the variables of teamwork to be effective communication, level of trust, interpersonal skills, team cohesiveness, accountability, and leadership, Al Salman and Hassan (2016) postulated that there is a significant relationship between teamwork and

employee engagement, and according to Cohen and Bailey (1999), organizations which have emphasized on teams have resulted in increased employee performance, greater productivity, and better problem-solving at work.

Previous studies found that teamwork had a positive effect on job satisfaction (Abdullah et al., 2012; Musriha, 2013, which influenced employee productivity (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993) and organizational commitment (Ghorbanhosseini, 2013; Zincirkiran, Emhan, and Yasar, 2015). Similarly, Musriha (2013) reported that effective teamwork activity can lead to increased job satisfaction and higher employee performance which will ultimately lead to employee engagement.

The figure below presents these dimensions of teamwork (communication, team structure, leadership, situation monitoring, and mutual support) as independent variables and Employee Engagement as the dependent variable.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual model of the study

### 3. Research Methodology

A cross-sectional research design was adopted in conducting this study. Data were collected from selected registered private primary and secondary school employees in Jos North and Jos South Local Government Areas of Plateau State. The target population was 850 employees (academic and non-academic staff) drawn from these registered private primary and secondary schools. As suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 265 was drawn from the total population of 850 and a random sampling approach was employed to select respondents from the individual primary and secondary schools. Employees of these selected registered private primary and secondary schools were surveyed based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the study (Hair et al., 2016). This sampling method offers the advantage of collecting a large number of responses at a low cost and within a short period, thus enhancing the adequacy of the sampling procedure (Hair et al., 2016). Questionnaires distributed were 305 and 289 were returned, of which 274 were found usable and 15 were discarded because 9 were not properly filled and 4 were incomplete. Table 1 shows the summary of responses and Table 2 highlights the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire.

**Table 1:** Summary of Responses.

| Items                           | No. of Copies | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| No of Questionnaire Distributed | 305           | 100        |
| No of Returned Questionnaire    | 289           | 94.8       |
| No of Useful Questionnaires     | 274           | 89.8       |

From Table 1, the number of the useful questionnaire is 274 (89.8%) which is a response rate considered sufficient for statistical reliability and generalization. (Garson, 2016).

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics.**

| Characteristics                  | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative Percentage |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                    |           |            |                       |
| Male                             | 77        | 28         | 28                    |
| Female                           | 197       | 72         | 100.0                 |
| <b>Age Range</b>                 |           |            |                       |
| 20-30                            | 85        | 31         | 31                    |
| 31-40                            | 72        | 26.3       | 57.3                  |
| 41-50                            | 75        | 27.4       | 84.7                  |
| 51 and above                     | 42        | 15.4       | 100.0                 |
| <b>Marital Status</b>            |           |            |                       |
| Single                           | 114       | 41.6       | 41.6                  |
| Married                          | 132       | 48.2       | 89.8                  |
| Divorced                         | 5         | 1.8        | 91.6                  |
| Widowed                          | 23        | 7.4        | 100.0                 |
| <b>Educational Qualification</b> |           |            |                       |
| SSCE                             | 8         | 2.9        | 2.9                   |
| OND/ND/NCE                       | 64        | 23.4       | 26.3                  |
| HND/B.Sc./B.Ed.                  | 143       | 52.2       | 78.5                  |
| PGDE/M.Sc./M. A/M.Ed.            | 48        | 17.5       | 96                    |
| Others                           | 11        | 4          | 100.0                 |
| <b>Work Experience</b>           |           |            |                       |
| Below 5 years                    | 63        | 23         | 23                    |
| 6-10 years                       | 83        | 30.3       | 53.3                  |
| 11-15 years                      | 71        | 25.9       | 79.2                  |
| 16 years & above                 | 57        | 20.8       | 100.0                 |

The respondents' profile in Table 2 reveals that male respondents were 28%, while the female respondents were 72%. From the age range, we see that 31% are within the 20-30 years bracket, 26.3% are in the range of 31-40 years, 27.4% make up the 41-50 years range, while 15.3% fall within 51 years above bracket. 41.6% of the respondents were in the singles category, 48.2% were married, while the divorced and the widowed are 1.8% and 8.4% respectively. The respondents' profile also reveals that 2.9% of respondents are SSCE holders, 23.4% have OND/ND/NCE certificates, and 52.2% are first degree holders (i.e. HND/B.Sc./B.Ed.), 17.5% are PGDE/M.Sc./M.A/M.Ed. holders with 4% having their PhDs. Finally, 23% of the respondents have a working experience of below 5 years, 30.3% have worked between 5 and 10 years, 25.9% between 11 and 15 years, while 20.8% have been working for more than 16 years.

### 3.1. Variables and Instruments

In collecting data for this study, a structured questionnaire covering different dimensions of Teamwork, which are Leadership, Communication, Mutual Support, Situation Monitoring, and Team Structure) was used. Items relating to

Employee Engagement were also included in the questionnaire. The study adopted the TeamSTEPP Teamwork Perception Questionnaire developed by Baker, Krokos, and Amodeo (2008) and was modified to measure the teamwork variable. It consisted of a 29-item scale. The Employee Engagement variable was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schanfeldi and Bakker (2003) and it consisted of 6 items. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 measured all the variables.

The researcher made use of previously validated scales to measure the different constructs in the study to confirm the face validity. To ensure the reliability of the measurement scale items, a pilot test was also conducted with a representative sample of 25 respondents. After this was done, cleaning, editing, and analysis were done on the data collected using multivariate statistical analyses of the Structural Equation Model (SEM). This statistical procedure is made up of descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, reliability test, aggregation test, correlation test, regression test, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Measurement of the reliability of the instrument was assessed while CFA via SEM was performed in examining the model's fitness and the hypothesized relationships between the constructs in this study.

Table 3 also confirms the reliability of the measurement instrument as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores for the selected constructs in this study were highly reliable because they were above the cut-off limit of 0.70 (Hair et al.,2016). The results also showed that AVE values were above 0.50, which is the acceptable norm, thus revealing supportive evidence for convergent validity.

**Table 3: Result of Convergent Reliability Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

| Variables           | Items                | Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Estimated | Discriminant Validity | No. of items |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Threshold           |                      | $\geq 0.7$                  | $\geq 0.7$            | $\geq 0.5$                 |                       |              |
| Teamwork            | Communication        | 0.716                       | 0.867                 | 0.635                      | 0.797                 | 5            |
|                     | Leadership           | 0.714                       | 0.949                 | 0.530                      | 0.728                 | 6            |
|                     | Team Structure       | 0.839                       | 0.928                 | 0.654                      | 0.809                 | 8            |
|                     | Situation Monitoring | 0.833                       | 0.990                 | 0.695                      | 0.834                 | 7            |
|                     | Mutual Support       | 0.833                       | 0.889                 | 0.568                      | 0.754                 | 5            |
| Employee Engagement |                      | 0.772                       | 0.836                 | 0.542                      | 0.736                 | 5            |

#### Model Fit Statistics

CMIN/DF=1.119

TLI= 0.949

CFI= 0.975

RMSEA= 0.024

### 3.2. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

A CFA procedure via SEM was carried out to determine the overall goodness-of-fit of the specified model (see Figure 1). The measurement model was an acceptable fit to the data as indicated by the CFA. Table 3 supports this observation, as CMIN/degrees of freedom(df) = 1.119, the Tucker–Lewis's Index (TLI = 0.949), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.975), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.024) were within the required limits recommended by Hair et al. (2016).

### 3.3. Hypotheses Testing for the Structural Model

The structural models were assessed to validate the hypotheses (H1-H5) for this study after the confirmation of the reliability and validity of the measurement model. In line with the principles of maximum likelihood, the proposed conceptual model (see Figure 1) was tested using SEM estimation. This was done using the assessment of path



estimates through the observation of standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficients, standardized error, t-values, and p-values (p). To accept the hypotheses, the path estimates are required to be significant at a 5% level. Table 4 presents the analysis of the results.

Table 4 highlights the significant relationships that exist among the variables; Dimensions of Teamwork and Employee Engagement. The result reveals thus H1 (Communication and Employee Engagement:  $\beta=0.243$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); H2 (Leadership and Employee Engagement:  $\beta=0.620$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); H3 (Team Structure and Employee Engagement:  $\beta=-0.063$ ,  $p=0.025$ ); H4 (Situation Monitoring and Employee Engagement  $\beta=0.195$ ,  $p=0.000$ ); and H5 (Mutual Support and Employee Engagement:  $\beta=-0.483$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This means that all the hypotheses (H1 – H5) are supported and accepted.

Finally, using Gender and Work Experience as control variables, findings from Table 4 provide evidence of accepted model fit estimates of CMIN/DF=1.200, GFI=0.988, AGFI=0.961, TLI=0.993, CFI=0.997, and RMSEA=0.027. This means there is satisfactory goodness of fit within the data.

**Table 4:** Hypotheses testing and model fit results

| Hypotheses  | Direct Path Estimates( $\beta$ ) | S. E  | t-value | Probability Value(p) | Hypothesis Result (p<0.05) |
|---|----------------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>H1:</b> Communication and Employee Engagement        | 0.243                            | 0.042 | 5.79    | 0.000                | Supported                  |
| <b>H2:</b> Leadership and Employee Engagement           | 0.620                            | 0.074 | 8.38    | 0.000                | Supported                  |
| <b>H3:</b> Team Structure and Employee Engagement       | -0.063                           | 0.028 | -2.25   | 0.025                | Supported                  |
| <b>H4:</b> Situation Monitoring and Employee Engagement | 0.195                            | 0.054 | 3.61    | 0.000                | Supported                  |
| <b>H5:</b> Mutual Support and Employee Engagement       | -0.483                           | 0.072 | -6.71   | 0.000                | Supported                  |

**Model Fit Statistics**

CMIN/DF=1.200  
 GFI= 0.988  
 AGFI=0.961  
 TLI= 0.993  
 CFI= 0.997  
 RMSEA= 0.027

**4. Finding and Discussion**

The results revealed that Teamwork significantly predicts employee engagement, which implies that in organizations where the dimensions of Teamwork (leadership, communication, team structure, situation monitoring, and mutual support) are present, employees will be highly engaged in carrying out their duties.

Firstly, H1 reveals that communication significantly influences employee engagement of employees of private primary and secondary schools in Plateau State. Highlighting a  $\beta=0.243$  and  $p=0.000$ , this result shows a significant relationship and it is supported. This finding is corroborated by previous work done by Cropanzano and Michelle (2005) and Karanges (2014), who posited that communication, has a significant influence on employee engagement. Kang and Sung (2017) in their work carried out among 483 individuals who work as sales representatives also concurred that there exists a significant relationship between communication and employee engagement, which ultimately reduces employee turnover. Thus, effective communication is of utmost importance if organizations desire their employees to be engaged in achieving set goals.

Secondly, leadership and employee engagement were hypothesized in H2 and the relationship was found to be significant at  $\beta=0.620$  and  $p=0.000$ . This means there exists a significant relationship between leadership and employee engagement of private primary and secondary school employees in Plateau State. This finding corresponds with earlier works done by Papalexandris and Galanaki (2009), Hon and Lu (2010), and Shuck and Herd (2012) who found that there is a strong and positive relationship between leadership and employee engagement. Datche and Mukulu (2015) in the work done among supervisors in the Civil Service in Kenya on the engagement of subordinates

profess that leadership in general positively relates to employee engagement, and so also is the work of Meyer and Allen (2006), which confirmed that leadership can be used as an antecedent for organizational commitment. This suggests that for employees to be committed and fully engaged in the workplace, quality leadership is needed.

Thirdly, a significant relationship was predicted between team structure and employee engagement. Even though the  $\beta$ -value shows a negative direction (-0.063), which may be a result of other factors not covered in this research, the relationship still shows a statistically significant one, thereby resulting in H3 being supported. The result reveals that the influence of team structure on employee engagement among employees of private primary and secondary schools in Plateau State is statistically significant ( $\beta=-0.063$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). Previous works on the study of these variables were limited thereby giving a good ground for further studies to be carried out in the future.

Fourthly, the relationship between situation monitoring and employee engagement was also found to be significant statistically at  $\beta=0.195$  and  $p=0.000$ . This shows that H4 is supported and there is a relationship between the variables in private primary and secondary schools in Plateau State. The findings of similar/previous studies on Situation Monitoring and Employee Engagement were also limited, which calls for more scholarly work to be carried out.

Fifthly, mutual support has a significant influence on employee engagement among the staff of private primary and secondary schools in Plateau State. This is highlighted in H5 with a direct path estimate ( $\beta$ ) of -0.483 and a p-value of 0.000. The  $\beta$ -value (direct path estimates) also shows a negative direction, which may be proof that other factors were not put into consideration, but the p-value shows a statistically significant relationship. This shows that H5 is supported and accepted but limited work has been done on it in the past. This is important as it points to a good ground for future studies.

#### **4.1. Theoretical Implication**

This study contributes to the body of literature by providing useful and relevant measurement scales that can be explored for future studies in understanding the relationship between the dimensions of Teamwork (Communication, Leadership, Team Structure, Situation Monitoring, and Mutual support) and Employee Engagement in different fields and settings. The proposed conceptual framework has also shown us proof of being effective in calling forth empirical evidence on how the cultivation of these dimensions can lead to improved employee engagement.

Based on the results of this study, five theoretical contributions were realized. First, Communication was found to contribute immensely in contributing to Employee Engagement as it reveals that communication is an important element in foresting the engagement of employees. This finding also adds to the current debate in the literature by revealing an understanding of the direction of the relationship between Communication and Employee Engagement in the academic system.

Secondly, evidence of the theoretical connection between Leadership and Employee Engagement was also provided as the result suggests that Leadership is an important element in raising a strong system of Employee Engagement. This finding plays a major role in contributing to the current debate in the literature by bringing to light an understanding of the direction of the relationship that exists between Leadership and Employee Engagement in the context of the academic system.

Thirdly, evidence that shows a theoretical connection between Team Structure and Employee Engagement was provided. Consequently, this finding opens up a new field in the current debate in the literature, as very limited work has been done in the past to investigate the relationship between these two variables. This calls for the attention of scholars to investigate and understand the link between Team Structure and Employee Engagement in future studies.

Fourthly, the study presents a new perspective on the role of Situation Monitoring in contributing to Employee Engagement. It shows that Situation Monitoring is critical in the engagement of employees within private primary and secondary schools in the academic environment, thereby giving insight into the understanding of what Situation Monitoring is all about. It also opens a new vista in the study of Situation Monitoring and Employee Engagement as very limited work has been done on the subject in the past.

Fifthly, this study highlights the relationship that exists between Mutual Support and Employee Engagement, even though limited work has been done on them in the past. More work is still needed in this field of study for researchers to probe and harness the relationship, particularly in other settings. It should be noted, that this is a new direction in literature as most studies in the past have concentrated on organizational support, perceived managerial support, supervisor support, and so on.

In conclusion, this work makes contributions to the beginnings of new research to discover how Team Structure, Situation Monitoring, and Mutual Support could be cultivated to stimulate Employee Engagement. Therefore, this study provides an up-to-date conceptual model that proves that the impact of the dimensions of Teamwork on Employee Engagement can be strengthened.

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the dimensions of Teamwork influence the engagement of employees in private primary and secondary schools in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The results were corresponding in character with the extant literature, and thus show support for all the hypotheses (H1-H5) in the study. From these results, it was established that Communication was related positively and significantly to Employee Engagement. In addition, Leadership exerted a positive and significant effect on the level of Employee Engagement. Team Structure and Mutual support were discovered to have a negative but significant relationship with Employee Engagement and lastly, Situation Monitoring was found to influence Employee Engagement positively and significantly.

The goal of this work was to practically develop recommendations on how private primary and secondary schools can maximize the benefits of having a system where employees are fully engaged in carrying out their job roles and responsibilities in the workplace. This study recommends that the management of these institutions continue to cultivate the levels of Communication, Leadership, Team Structure, Situation Monitoring, and Mutual Support among their employees to stimulate Engagement. Applying these recommendations will enable improvement in service delivery of employees.

### 5.1. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations were identified despite the usefulness of this study. First, the study was limited to private primary and secondary schools operating in Plateau State, Nigeria. It is possible that the information given by the target sample is not actually what obtains in the primary and secondary schools system, and so, it cannot be generalized to the entire population in Nigeria. Second, the study did not look at other influential factors such as organizational culture, employee voice behavior, job security, conducive working environment, training, competitive wages, salaries, etc., that may affect employee engagement. Third, a longitudinal approach with multiple sources of data and validation in multiple research contexts may be more conducive to the conclusions drawn.

We, therefore, recommend that future research on this topic be extended to other geographical areas across Nigeria, other academic environments, employees of tertiary institutions, and to other countries (both developed and developing) to have different insights into the interrelationship among these selected constructs. The model and measuring instruments could also be cross-validated in other industries such as construction, telecommunication, security, etc. in other climes to test their reliability, relevance, and applicability.

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